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regrets, with Whymper himself, that the conquest of the Matterhorn was achieved without Jean-Antoine Carrel.* Carrel missed it by three days. On the 17th of July, 1865, he and J. B. Bich, two out of four who ascended from the southern side, reached the summit of the mountain and planted their flag by the side of the cairn erected on the 14th by Whymper and Croz.

Two years passed before another attempt was made, and then, little by little, the climbing of the Matterhorn came to be regarded as part of the regular Swiss round. In 1871 Miss Walker made the ascent, and Vittorio Sella, after two failures, succeeded in 1882 in reaching the summit on the 17th of March, the first ascent made in the winter season. In 1892 twenty-three travellers and their numerous guides met on the same day on the top of the Matterhorn.

From time to time a fatal accident occurs, to warn the tourist of ever-present perils; but the telegraph and the railroad, none the less, threaten to invade the once unconquerable Matterhorn.

Mr. Rey is an alpinist, and has taken his share of mountain dangers. His sixth chapter, entitled *Il Cervino di Furggen*, is the description of a performance that oppresses the reader like a nightmare, and makes him adopt for his own the comment quoted from the *Journal de Genève* (Sept. 15, 1899):

The Italian clubbist who had himself hoisted up the overhanging crest of Furggen deserves to be fined. He is a dangerous madman.

Mr. Rey confesses that he had not seen the matter in that light. There are but two kinds of persons in the world; those who are alpinists and those who are not.

The illustrations of the book, 48 in number, are not all effective, though they are well reproduced. The most striking are those from photographs, such as *The Summit of the Matterhorn from Giomein* and *The Matterhorn at Sunset*.

A summary of the geology of the mountain closes this magnificent publication.

Anschauliche Grundlagen der Mathematischen Erdkunde zum Selbstverstehen und zur Unterstützung des Unterrichts von Dr. Kurt Geissler. Mit 52 Figuren im Text. Leipzig Druck und Verlag von B. G. Teubner. (Marks 3.) 1904.

This is an elementary text-book, judiciously arranged for the

* He was the man, of all those who attempted the ascent of the Matterhorn, who most deserved to be the first upon its summit. He was the first to doubt its inaccessibility, and he was the only man who persisted in believing that its ascent would be accomplished. (Whymper, *The Ascent of the Matterhorn*, p. 280.)

purpose of imparting to the student a clear understanding of the salient principles of geodesy and of the points of contact between this science and the sciences of geology, meteorology, and physical geography. The discussions of the form and size of the earth, and of its mass and motions, are well presented, and geodetic astronomy is treated to an extent sufficient to round out the whole subject with completeness. The interest and value attached to the treatise are enhanced by a final chapter setting forth the most recent views, based on the most exact levelling operations and measurements of attraction, concerning the deformations of the terrestrial geoid from an exact figure of revolution. Careful investigations show that there is a decided tendency for the deflections of the plumb line to be in such a direction as to indicate that they are due to a defect in the mass of the oceans or an excess of mass in the continents, or to both, and that regional deflections common to considerable areas are due to the general or large features of the topography; and it has become evident that to make true progress in the study of the figure of the earth the relation between the deflections of the vertical and the general features of the surface forms must receive close attention.

G. W. L.

A Critical Study of the Various Dates Assigned to the Birth of Christopher Columbus. The Real Date 1451. With a Bibliography of the Question. By Henry Vignaud, First Secretary of the Embassy of the United States in Paris, Author of "Toscanelli and Columbus," etc., etc., etc. London, Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles, 39 Great Russell Street, over against the South-West Corner of the British Museum, 1903.

Mr. Vignaud has studied the information obtainable from the assertions of Columbus, from the testimony of his contemporaries, and from the documents of Italian notaries, in which mention is made of Columbus or members of his family; and he arrives at the conclusion that the Discoverer was born in 1451. The document which justifies this conclusion is one drafted at Genoa the 31st of October, 1470, by the notary, L. Raggio, wherein Columbus (then present with his father) is described as the son of Domenico, and nineteen years old.

Mr. Vignaud's argument that this date of 1451 fits in with the well-known facts in the life of Columbus is entirely sound.

He gives the credit for the first recognition of the date to Mr. Richard Davey, author of an article on *The Boyhood and Youth of Columbus* (The National Review, October, 1892).

In his Introduction Mr. Vignaud says that the necessary texts